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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/030,461	04/11/2002	Masahiro Abukawa	5754-00007	8439

7590

10/22/2002

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EXAMINER

AMIRI, NAHID

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3635

DATE MAILED: 10/22/2002

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/030,461

Applicant(s)

ABUKAWA, MASAHIRO

Examiner

Nahid Amiri

Art Unit

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 03 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 11 April 2002.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-14 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-14 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 11 April 2002 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 1-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. The claim language that claims are written by applicant is inconsistent because applicant is claiming the supporting protrusion (5) consists of a pair of thin-walled members extending in parallel in the longitudinal direction of the hollow cylindrical body; but said thin-walled members each have a ridge line (7) sloping toward the opening cover (2). It is not clear how the members can extend in parallel and be sloping.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1-6, 12 and 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over US Patent No. 5,392,582 Abukawa in view of JP Patent 4,343,18 Goro Yoshioka.

In regard to claims 1-5, 14: Abukawa discloses the claimed invention except having bolt hole with bolt on the side wall. Abukawa discloses FIG. 1, column 1, line 19-30, a hollow cylindrical 1 body having an opening cover C (as marked) at an end, and a supporting protrusion 5 on the inner peripheral wall, adapted to support reinforcing bars 6a, wherein: the supporting protrusion (5) consists of a pair of thin-

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walled members extending in parallel in the longitudinal direction of the hollow cylindrical body; and said thin-walled members each have a ridge line R (as marked) sloping toward the opening cover C with the portion of the thin-walled member supporting the reinforcing bar 6a inserted through the opening cover C constituting the apex A (as marked). Yoshioka teaches FIG. 3, having a bolt hole 8 with bolt 9 on the side wall and supporting protrusion 7. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention was made to provide the mortar grouting connector having a protrusion with bolt in order to secure the reinforcement within the hollow cylinder.

In regard to claims 6 and 12: Abukawa and Yoshioka discloses the claimed invention except the distance between the reinforcing bar supporting portions (6) of the pair of thin-walled members is smaller than the diameter of the reinforcing bar (12); and the distance between the reinforcing bar supporting portion (6) and the cylindrical body central axis is substantially equal to the radius of the circular hole (3) of the opening cover (2) and the diameter of the circular hole (3) of the opening cover (2) is the same as the diameter of the reinforcing bar (12) inserted into the joint, or an appropriate clearance is provided between the circular hole (3) of the opening cover (2) and the reinforcing bar (12) inserted into the joint. It would have been an obvious matter of design choice to have distance between the reinforcing bar of the pair of thin walled members been smaller than the diameter of the reinforcing bar or to have same diameter of the circular hole of opening cover and reinforcement bar, since such a modification would have involved a mere change in the size of a component. A change in size is generally recognized as being within the level of ordinary skill in the art. In re Rose, 105 USPQ 237 (CCPA 1955).

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Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 7-11 and 13 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

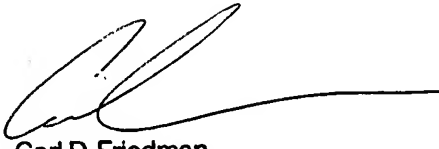
Claims 7-11 and 13 would be allowable if rewritten or amended to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, set forth in this Office action.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Nahid Amiri whose telephone number is (703) 305-4241 and Fax number is 703-305-7687. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday from 8:00-5:30 p.m. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor Carl Friedman can be reached at (703) 308-0839.

na

October 16, 2002


Carl D. Friedman
Supervisory Patent Examiner
Group 3600